# INDO-CEYLON - - -
# - - - CONNECTION



BY

V. V. RAJARATNAM





1932

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A plea for the immediate total abolition of the restrictions placed on the social and economic union of Ceylon with India, as a first step towards the ultimate political communion in a larger federation.

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# PROEM

The subject matter of this booklet, (the publication whereof has been unfortunately delayed for lack of finance) is not only of interest to Indians having anything to do with Ceylon but may be of somewhat wider import. It is therefore desirable to be presented in a much more attractive form in regard to typography and execution, with a discriptive map attached. However better late than never and something is better than nothing for the present; and it is hoped the next edition will, when issued, be given better effect.

Thanks are due to Mr. K. Natesa Aiyer of Hatton who kindly undertook the publication even in the present form.

Colombo,
1st. August, 1932.

THE AUTHOR.

# POINTERS

1. The demand for the incorporation of the so-called *Safeguards* on account of the British Commercial interests in the future enlarged Indian constitution is nothing but a camouflage of their determination to continue the aggressive economical exploitation to the detriment of the interests of India as evidenced by

2. The obstructive tactics of the powerful combination of the two vested British interests which are virtually monopolising the internal, coastwise and foreign trade of South India, aided and abetted by the ruling powers, by whose acts of commission and omission

3. The shipping trade of several seaports in S. India and Ceylon has been effectively crushed insteaded of being assisted to develop by the march of time and in conformity with the world's progress.

4. The unwarranted restrictions of the otherwise healthy growth of neighbourly intercourse between India and Ceylon amounts to a callous disregard of the principle of interantional comity, nothing to say of

5. The historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural and economical ties binding India and Ceylon which entitle them to be drawn into a single political entity, which is further cemented by

6. The placid waters of the Palks Bay, which affords unique advantages as a means to promote the ame-

nities of civilization and to revive the latent maritime spi-rit of S. India and Ceylon, whose intercoastal trade has woefully been suppressed.

7. The compulsory diversion of the passenger traffic between India and Ceylon to a single route tantamounts rather to a curtailing of the liberty of the travelling public, the majority of whom are put to

8. More trouble and expense than if they are allowed access into Ceylon by any route and by any means at their own discretion.

9. Such restriction of intercommunication to a single route is nowhere else imposed between any two adjoining countries in the world; so that

10. It is productive of different vicious complexes in the minds of neighbours and kinsmen, as indeed Indians and Ceylonese are.

11. This is the result of India and Ceylon being held under foreign tutelage, whereby Indians going to Ceylon are made to suffer four-fold disabilities and inconveniences, among others, viz.,

(a) the harassing quarantine restrictions imposed on their own soil in the name of their consanguineous neighbours.

(b) the painful feeling of inferiority in the midst of their neighbours.

(c) compulsion to travel at a higher cost in order to avoid detention at the quarantine camp; and

(d) prohibition to enter Ceylon by the shortest and cheapest means, taking boat from any port in India and to land at any port in Ceylon.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

The unreasonable restrictions and limitations imposed during the past 35 years by the Government of Ceylon on the Indo-Ceylon intercourse in the guise of quarantine, thereby giving a fillip to a combination of two formidable British commercial interests with far reaching ramifications in and out of India to crush the legitimate indigenous interests, form the main theme of this booklet.

The first part deals with the national aspect of the question, while the second part discusses the broad international viewpoint

In a communication addressed to Mr. Gandhi on the eve of his departure to the Indian Round Table Conferance (Annexure I), the author of this booklet pointed out the wanton suppression of the coastal trade in S. India, effected by the powerful combination of the two highly organised British interests and also stressed the necessity of protecting Indian interests in the matter of concessions on account of *Safeguards*, so vehemently insisted on by Lord Reading and other representatives of British interests at the R. T. C. in London. While recounting at some length the pressure brought to bear on the then budding Chittagong shipping enterprise by the B. I. S. N. Co in his concluding address in the R. T. C. on *Safeguards* (Annexure II), Mr. Gandhi somehow omitted even a brief reference to any of the S. Indian in

stances of high handed aggressive policy of the powerful British interests, though, possibly, he might have had these in mind all the while.

Lest the S. Indian grievances go unnoticed by default, it is thought advisable to compile and publish all the latest contributions relevant to the subject. Furthermore the issue of this booklet is considered doubly desirable, especially at this juncture, while a fresh Indian Constitution embodying British *Safeguards* is in the making and also when the Bill to reserve the coastal trade of India to Indian shipping is once again before the Indian legislature.

Again, towards the end of the last year a somewhat virulent cyclonic storm played havoc over the northern end of the Island of Ceylon and on the adjoining Indian territories. As a consequence, the S. I. Ry. line over the Rameswaram Island and the C. G. Ry. between Madavachchi and Talaimannar were considerably damaged and the daily traffic over the only Indo-Ceylon route was dislocated for a period of 11 days continuously. The author of this publication then put up a mild plea (Annexure III) to have the two older routes re-opened, so that they may be useful in times of need as alternatives or auxiliaries. The Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce took up the cue and wrote to the Agent of the S. I. Ry (Annexure IV), suggesting the closure of the newly created costly Dhanushkodi route and the adoption of the Tuticorin route for regular d a i l y Indo-Ceylon traffic as before. The foregoing and the correspondence, press contributions etc. which followed form the annexures to this publication, which will, it is hoped, impress on the general public and the authorities in India

and Ceylon the paramount necessity of lifting the existing vexatious restrictions of the natural flow of traffic between the Island and the mainland.

A confidential communication has recently been received from an apparently r e l i a b l e source (Annexure IX) which throws some additional light on the *secret pact* between the S. I. Ry. Co. and the B. I. S. N. Co., in regard to the deliberate manipulation of transport facilities in and between S. India and Ceylon. The existence of such a pact with the knowledge of both the Governments was, it might be mentioned, brought to light long ago by means of interpellations and answers in the Indian Legislature made at the instance of the author and published as an annexure to a booklet issued by him in 1921.

Extracts from the speeches made at a meeting of the Ceylon Students' Association in London and those from Mrs. C. V. Aserappa's presidential address at the annual general meeting of the Women's Political Asso-ciation of Ceylon in Colombo are appended as Annexures X and XI. respectively, merely to give additional, authoritative weight to the author's pointed reference to the intimate affinity existing between India and Ceylon, notwithstanding the awry attempt to keep the Island as far outside the ambit of the mainland as possible, even as the endeavour now made to wean Burmah from India.

About 20 years back, while the Dhanushkodi-Mannar Indo-Ceylon route was taking shape, the *Times of Ceylon*, whether sportingly or tentatively, suggested that the port of Colombo would be better able to attract the commerce of S. India by the new

route than Tuticorin, which was then a notoriously inhospitable harbour. The *Madras Mail* immediately took up the cudgel againt the Colombo journal and retorted that the little Island of Ceylon ought to be linked to S.India to be administered as an ordinary district thereof instead of being given a Crown Colony status with a costly administration. An extract of this editorial was appended by the author to his first pamphlet on Indo - Ceylon Connection issued in 1919. Since then much water has flowed under the bridge and the Ceylonese have taken to intense nationalism and hatred of foreigners, *not excluding Indians*. Nevertheless, there has been no dearth of high personages and politicians on both sides who have expressed their unequivocal opinion that it wonld be better if Ceylon were joined politically with India and harmful if Ceylon were left to drift away from the Motherland. A new book written by an anonymous author has recently appeared in London, extracts from which are appended to this booklet as Annexure XII. This new book sets forth very convincing arguments why Ceylon should hasten to reunite with her own Mother India before she falls a prey to covetous foreigners. But, of course, the final decision of the question whether ~~the~~ the little Island lying so near to India and having so much in common with the Motherland is to remain a separate entity or whether she is to become one of the autonomous provinces of the future Doninion of Federated India - is better left to her own sons and daughters themselves. The following words of Sir Baron Jayatilaka, Home Minister to the Government of Ceylon, may be commended in this connection:— 'Another aspect we cannot overlook at this

time is that India and Ceylon has been for centuries indissolubly linked together. Economically, India and Ceylon has been very closely connected and I belive that the closer economic union of India and Ceylon will be to the advantage of both."

For those readers who find no time to go through even these few pages, a set of pointers is appended at the opening, which will give a succinct idea of the contents and aim of this publication.

## PART—I
### (National Aspect.)

Every maritime country in the world which is self-governing has its own mercantile marine manned by its own mariners, controlled by its own capitalists, aided, subsidised and patronised by its own Government and employed to serve at least its own coastal, if not international, trade.

India and Ceylon, though possessing long stretches of seaboard and though holding sway over all the seas of the old world in the past, are now entangled in the tentacles of the octopus - like B. I. S. N Co., aided by the patronage and sympathy of the benevolent British rule.

During the first decade of the present century a wave of nationalism rising in the bosom of Bengal swept over the length and breadth of the whole of India. As a result of this first awakening enthusiasm of the masses, a number of indigenous shipping concerns came into existence in all parts of India, but they could not hold their own for long and the upstarts succumbed one by one to the fierce competition of the all-powerful B. I. S. N. Co. Only the Scindia Steam Navigation Co. and one or two minor shipping enterprises, all of North India, have outlived the rate-cutting rivalry of the firmly established British concern. In the south, none dared to revive the old maritime spirit of the land, ever since the Tuticorin Steam Navigation Co was crushed out of existence over 20 years back. In this connection, the following extract

from a special contribution to the columns of the *Ceylon Daily News* of the 30th April 1932 by Mr Aluwihare, B. A., B, C. L. (OXON) Bar,-at-Law will be of interest:- "England took away from her India's shipping trade and today, when Indian shipping is once again beginning, it has to face the truculence of the English monopolist"

While thus the shipping trade of the whole of India, both coastwise and foreign, has almost exclusively passed into the hands of non-Indians, S. India is further held in the iron grip of the S. I. Railway Co. in the matter of internal transport as well. Finding it impossible to compete in a fair and open field with the local board and private railway enterprises and with the small sailing crafts then plying between all the minor ports in S. India and Ceylon, these railway and shipping interests have, for the past 35 years, combined together and, with the aid of the Governments concerned, suppressed the legitimate development of the shipping trade of several seaports, especially those of the Tanjore and Ramnad Districts in S. India and of North Ceylon, by denying railway and shipping facilities to those ports.

All the railways in British India are, as in Ceylon, public property; but some of them in India are worked by British concerns as commercial undertakings on contracts for specified periods. Formerly, railways were for the most part under the control of the respective Provincial Governments, so that healthy progress was initiated and directed by each Province in accordance with local requirements. In Southern India, local boards were permitted to raise funds for the construction of branch and feeder railways. The District Board of Tanjore, where the cost of making and maintaining ordinary roads is admittedly too high, was the pioneer in this remune-

rative field of public utility and several other local bodies followed in its wake. Had this form of developing internal communication outside of Government finance been allowed full play from its begining 40 years ago, there would undoubtedly be a network of railways by now, connecting each and every town of importance with every seaport, thus affording easy, rapid and cheap means of inland and coastwise transport in S. India and bringing this neglected corner into line with the more favoured Northern India, not to say with the materially much more advanced western countries.

But fate has decreed otherwise. About 25 years back, a body of British railway experts was set up as an adjunct to the Government of India, who took away all the powers of the Local Governments in the matter of initiating and controlling railways, no matter whether they are of Imperial importance or of only local utility. The Indian Railway Board is so constituted that, throughout the quarter of a century of its existence, its activities have been partial to the Britsh interests working the the railways and prejudicial to the iniligenos local interests. All the local board railways in South India have now been wrested by the Government of India and assigned to be absorbed into S. I. Railway system, whose interests are naturally antagonistic to the development of indigenous industry and commerce. For instance, the S. I. Ry. administration is all along oppugning the natural development of the so-called minor seaports of S. India and the Indian Railway Board is never at a loss to find an excuse for taking sides with the Railway Administration whenever the question of railway exten-

sion in S. India is brought to the fore. Besides, with the exception of Burmah, which is about to be sundered from the future India, Madras is the most outlying Province of India and it is a far cry to Delhi or Simla, where the Railway Board is enthroned. S. India is, forsooth, treated as cindrella by the olympic gods of Delhi or Simla. Hence, from past experience, it has good reason to be afraid of the treatment which will be accorded to it, even in the new enlarged constitution, wherein it is expected to become autonomous. This apprehension is further enhanced by the recent decision taken by the Consultative Committee of the R. T. C. in Delhi to the effect that a clause should be inserted in the Constitution Act itself that "there shall be a Statutory Railway Board for the administration of railways, the functions, composition and powers of which are to be determined by an act of the Federal Legislature."

When powers now vesting in the Central Government will largely be devolved in the Provincial Governments and when each Provincial Government will, to a large extent, become autonomous in its own sphere, where is the necessity for retaining the unwanted Railway Board as an expensive adjunct of the Central Government? The Railway Board may well be abolished and its powers over rates and fares may be transferred, as recomended by the Consultative Committee, to an independent tribunal, which may be set up by the Federal Legislature, as suggested by some of the members of the Committee and placed under the control of the Federal Minister of Transport and Communication. Anyway, the future autonomous Provincial Governments should have full powers vest-

ed in them to sanction and control and branch feeder railways of purel y local nature.

In recent years of economic depression, a persistent cry is raised in Ceylon that their railways are not paying their way—nay—are actually working at considerable loss. And there is another cry that what is called the "dry zone," i. e., the northern half of Ceylon, could not be colonized and brought under cultivation. It is a pity that Ceylon could not understand—or is she deliberately ignoring?—the real and main cause of the deplorable state of affairs. Ceylon is possessed of no less than 15 seaports along her entire seacoast of over 750 miles, but Colombo is virtually the only port favoured by authorities and provided with a costly artificial harbour and kept open for shipping trade with foreign countries and the neighbouring mainland. Hence it is not surprising to find more than a fourth of the Island's comparatively meagre population concentrated in and around Colombo. As regards shipping at the other ports, Ceylon is practically kept hermetically sealed and railways connecting those ports are without outlets, like blind alleys leading nowhere. Broad gauge railways constructed at considerable cost, traversing for the most part through depopulated jungle land and hewn rugged rocks and connecting ports that have no communication with the outer world—can never be expected to give adequate return even in years of prosperity. How then can it be prevented from producing recurring loss during these lean years?

Ceylon is now contemplanting to appoint a Trade Commissioner in India to find a much more favoured

market and to secure a reduction of the customs tariff for her products imported into India. India would only be too glad in showing the utmost sympathy and love towards her estranged daughter, if only the latter realised her folly of drifting away from her loving Mother. How can Ceylon expect India to treat her as a favoured one, when she is imposing unheard of restrictions on the long existing intercommunication and on the import of Indian cattle, goat, tobacco products etc? The best and only course would be to wipe off all the customs barriers on both sides.

The imposition of the obnoxious quarantine restrictions by Ceylon on Indian passengers is, it must be noted, purely a one sided anamoly, there being no such annoying restrictions on Ceylonese or any other foreigners landing in India. Whatever need there was for them to be imposed at the outset 35 years ago. there is a concensus of medical opinion that there is no such necessity now, inasmuch as the people in India have been rendered generally immunue from any serious infections disease' to the same extent as are their brethren in Ceylon. The large expenditure on the quarantine camp at Mandapam is no longer called for and it may be better utilised as a concentration camp for the labourers recruited in India on account of the Ceylon plantatations and the office of the Labour Commissioner now stationed at the congested interior city of Trichinopoly may be transferred to the salubrious seaside resort of Mandapam. That ordinary Indian passengers (other than labourers) travelling by third class at their own expense are subjected to the quarantine rigours, while those who can afford to travel at higher cost are allowed unimpeded passage, cannot but be construed as sheer administra-

tive cloak to indirectly help the Railway to profiteer at the expense of the already exploited Indians.

Up till 1897, every one of the following seaports in S. India was busily engaged in intercoastal trade and passenger traffic directly with each of the undermentioned seaports in the Inland of Ceylon*:—

| SOUTH INDIA | CEYLON |
|---|---|
| 1. Tirumalvasal | 1. Point Pedro |
| 2. Tranquebar | 2. Valvetitturai |
| 3. Nagore | 3. Kangesanturai |
| 4. Velankanni | 4. Kayts |
| 5. Topputurai | 5. Mannar |
| 6. Point Calimere | 6. Kalpitiya |
| 7. Adirampatnam | 7. Puttalam |
| 8. Ammapatnam | 8. Negombo |
| 9. Kottapatnam | 9. Beruwela† |
| 10. Tondi | 10. Kalutara |
| 11. Mandapam | 11. Galle |
| 12. Pamban | 12. Batticaloa |
| 13. Kilakarai | 13. Trincomalee |

*A few years back a Committee was appointed by the Government of Ceylon with Mr. K. Balasingham as Chairman to inquire into and report on the question of repening of the ports in the Jaffna District for passenger traffic with S. Indian ports. But this Committee as so many Committees appointed in Ceylon seems to be slumbering, at least two of the members being now *exeunt*.

†*Beruwela*, known as *Barberyn* in the days of the Portugese and the Dutch, was a busy port anterior to the British domination and the creation of Colombo Harbour, "whither the cinnamon is delivered in from all the circumjacent tracts and where there are several warehouses built of stone, as well for the purpose of storing it as for the preparation of *cair* or a sort of cloth, made of the fibres of cocoa. Just before them, in the harbour, the ships are able to anchor and ride in safety."

But the direct intercourse between these Indian ports and these Ceylon ports have now dwindled almost to nothing, owing to (1) the Govrnment of India's deliberate sanction to the S. I. Ry Company's manipulation of railway freight so as to divert the traffic away from the aforesaid ports in South India, (2) the Madras Government's passive acquiscence in B. I. S. N.Co's withdrawal of coasting steamers calling at some of these S. Indian ports, (3) the Madras Government's refusal to afford shipping facilities at these Indian ports (4) the Ceylon Goveroment's prohibition of human beings including ships' crew from India entering Ceylon except by the Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar route or by the bi-weekly steamer from Tuticorin; and above all. (5) the Indian, Madras and Ceylon Governments' deliberate acquiscence in the secret pact between the Railway and Steamer Companies to the ruin of the shipping trade and the maritime spirit of the said seaports.

*Cui bono?* Is it for the good of the Indians or that of the Ceylonese that the aforementioned ports of South India and Ceylon are deprived of healthy direct intercourse with each other? Or is it for the benefit of the foreign exploiters? These questions are better left to be answered by the readers themselves. One glaring effect of the combination of the various forces mentioned *supra* is that civilization's progress in these unfortunate lands has been retarded by at least 30 years.

According to the latest (1931) Census, the Island of Ceylon, with an area of 25,332 sq. miles, contains a population of 45,65,500, excluding the Indian sojourners of all denominations who number 735,000.

Leaving the Ceylon Muslims (Arabs, 270,000) and other minority communities(80,500)the Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils taken together number 42,15,000 and form the majority of Ceylon's vaunted permanent population. With all their intense ardour for their enchanted little isle, the Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils can never forget the historical fact that they are but the descendents of the Indians from Bengal and S. India, respectively, who immigrated into Ceylon about 2,500 years ago. The contact between the mainland and the island has never ceased or been interrupted since that first settlement, though the Sinhalese people have lost touch with India only in the beginning of the last century when their rule came to an end. Both the Ceylon Tamils and the Sinhalese have had occassionally to replenish their royal lines by indenting on the royal houses of the neighbouring S. Indian Kingdoms of the Cholas and the Pandyas (later Nayakas) whose princesses were also married to the royalties of the Sinhalese and the Jaffnese, both of whom were at one period or other under the suzarenity of the S. Indian Kings. During the Portugese and the Dutch occupation of the Jaffna Peninsula, hundreds of Jaffnese Hindu families driven by the religious persecutions of their alien rulers have migrated to, and permanently settled on the opposite coast of the Tanjore District. The Siva Temple at Vedraniam is held under the herditary control of a high priest from Varani in the Jaffna District. Important religious and social ceremonies in the Hindu families of the Jaffna Tamils are invariably presided over by the Saivite priests of Vedaraniam. Lastly, the Jaffna Tamils proceeding on pil-

grimages to the South Indian shrines, as they often do, by w a y of Rameswaram and Madura would naturally prefer to return home after completing their pilgrimages in the north by the short passage across the Palk Strait Thus the social and religious intercourse across the few miles of waterway intervening Ceylon and the mainland is too long-standing and intimate to be ever interrupted or restricted under any circumstances. But the shrewed westerners, highly skilled as they are in wielding the diplomatic weapon of *divide et impera*, particulary against the vainglorious orientals of India, Burma and Ceylon, have readily utilised the neo-nationalism of the Ceylonese for their own purpose by forbidding free intercourse with the descendents of their forebears on the mainland.

A word about the Palk Bay will n o t be amiss *e n p a s s a n t*. It is the only inclosed sea with narrow outlets to be met with in the South of India and is as such an invaluable asset to South India and Ceylon. It has never yet been fully explored, much less exploited. Its smooth waters are admirably fitted to the training of Indians and Ceylonese in modern seameanship and also for amateur boating. It is to be regretted that this natural source of health and wealth near at hand has so far been disgracefully neglected by the S. Indians and the Ceylonese alike. Any similarly well adapted waterway in Europe or America is playing an important part in civilization's progress and in affording human amenities in a variety of ways. But, unfortunately, orientals are in the habit of gloating over the past that they have attained the best civilization in all the world and that they

could not possibly improve their condition as, attested to in the following words by a globe-trotting Belgean schoolmaster, who was recently in Colombo:- "In every country I visited, I received the impression that the people believed that their country was the centre of the universe and that they were very much better than any other people, their language the purest, their history the most glorious and that they created civilization. It is by travel alone that one gets rid of that insularity." In fact the oriental mentality, immured as it is in the pernicious syllogisms of Fatalism and Maya Philosphy, has lost all spirit of adventure, enthusiasm and perseverence, which are the attributes indispensable for self-preservation in a world of incessant struggle for the very existence.

South India and Ceylon are peculiarly in the same boat in regard to the lack of indigenous enterprise in the field of commerce and industry of any great magnitude and the time has come when they must shake off their lethergy and mutual suspicion, join hands in one political confederation and assert their rights in their own home against any aggressive, mönopolising marauders.

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## PART—II

# INTERNATIONAL ASPECT.

It was in 1917 that Mr. Woodrow Wilson of immortal memory threw out the slogan SELF DETERMINATION as a challange to the unbounded greed and jealousy of the then warring nations of the world. Since then, the smaller nations of Europe, and to a certain extent of other continents too, are one by one attaining their freedom from out side domination and oppression.

India, with her teeming millions and a civilization of a remote past, is yet trudging the way to Liberation, all the while carrying the heavy burden of her past sins of having adopted an arrogant attitude of arrant exclusiveness and superiority and allowed diverse hordes to proselytise freely and to have political rights and privileges, without attempting at assimilation and unification, as in the case of Great Britain or any other country in the West.

While nations are becoming politically more and more independent of each other, they are, paradoxically, becoming interdependent and brought nearer and nearer culturally, socially and economically, with the advancement of modern socialogical ideas. In fact, the Great War has brought in its train minor wars and major revolutions and resurrected

nationalities and finally transformed the political, economical and social life and outlook so thoroughly that the world is now steadily, though necessarily slowly, moving towards that ultimate consummation of oneness—one vast unit of humanity, a gangrene on any part of which is liable, even today, to affect the whole.

There are unmistakable signs of the nations of Europe now slowly awakening to the above truth. Some time back, a proposal was put forward, in all seriousness, to demolish all the customs barriers existing between the different nations of Europe, with a view to bringing about a nexus to the attainment of the Brotherhood of Man, for which the League of of Nations has ostensibly been brought into existence. Another proposal in now on the *tapis* to put the world currency on an international monetary system in order to retrieve the financial catastrophe which befell most of the nations last year on the breakdown of the gold standard. In preparation for the forthcoming Imperial Economic Conference at Ottawa, the Federation of British Industries, taking note of the point that the present depression has revealed to an extraordinary degree the economic interdependence of all nations, has framed a vast scheme for the rationalisation of Industry on an Empire basis, coupled with a solution of the financial problems by the creation of a common Empire monetary system revolving round the sterling and the consequent disappearance of inter-Empire exchange difficulties, so designed as to facilitate the admission of other countries willing and able to co-operate with the sterling group, leaving the question of a possible world-wide monetary unit to be formulated and adopted later.

Though the League of Nations is now evidently finding itself unable to wield its authority effectively over recalcitrant, aggressive powers, it may, in due course, take its rightful place as the highest tribunal, in adjudicating international disputes. Imperialistic domination of one section of humanity over another and narrow mentality of national seclusion, which have been the chief causes of distructive warfare, will become phases in the past history of the human race.

How this is now hastened is indicated by the amazingly rapid development of intercommunication between widely distant parts of the world. In spite of their mutual jealousies and strife for predominance, European nations have made and are making communication through wireless telephone and transport by air and sea as well as by land between various States easy and swift.

The international telephonic system recently brought into service in London provides access to 90 per cent of the world's telephone. Once the wireless network scheme in India is complete, there is every possibility of Ceylon joining in the scheme which will enable wireless telephone connection to be made between England and Ceylon via India.

Various parts of the British Empire scattered all over the globe are being drawn nearer each other by this telephone service, by the Empire preference tariff and by the speeding up of the Empire air mail and passenger services. The world's biggest flying boat twice the size of the German giant DO. X. and designed to carry 120 passengers on the trans-Atlantic service to Canada is being planned by the British Air Ministry, which is also planning other great machines to bring the whole of the Empire into direct aerial communication

with London. As regards the eastward aerial service, postal planes operating to a regular 24 hours schedule at a speed of 200 miles per hour is one of the developments to which the British Air Ministry is now giving attention. It is hoped to bring India within 2½ days of England, the Cape within 4 days and Australia within 6 days. Agreement regarding the proposed air mail service between Karachi, Bombay and Madras has been signed between the Government of India and Messrs Tata & Sons, Ltd. Weekly air mail service between Karachi and Madras will commence in September of this year and there is every likelihood of this service being extended to Colombo.

When thus daily aerial services will have come into operation between Karachi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and extended southward to Colombo, it is not unreasonable to assume that mails and passengers will, some day not far distant, be carried in air expresess across the Bay of Bengal between a point of vantage on the Madras—Colombo Airway and Penang (in the Malay Peninsula) to be linked there with the Imperial Air Mail and Passenger Services to and from Australia and the Far East.

In the face of these vast developments taking place in all directions, how long the S. I. Ry. Co. and the B. I. Co. stand in the way of such inevitable progress? Or, how long will Ceylon be holding herself aloof behind the curtain of quarantine, shying at the closer contact, and curmudgeonly guarding herself against freer intercourse, with the Motherland. Certainly not for many years. For, when once Ceylon comes to realize, like India, the real cause of her economic subservience to

the tantalising exotic glamour, she is sure to return to the loving embrace of her welcoming Mother, to be unified with the future Indian Nation and constituting a powerful limb thereof—that is one of the autonomous Provinces of the Great Indian Empire of the future. At any rate, the existing *cordon sanitaire* drawn against the Indo—Ceylon *rapprochment* will have to be lifted bodily in the immediate future, as a first step towards the greater union, just as the international jealousies and strifes will eventually disappear from the face of this terraqueous Home of Humanity.

# PREDICATION.

There are a vast number of planters, merchants and other individual members of the Indian community in Ceylon that, being treated as foreigners, are sorely affected by the discriminating legislative and administrative measures recently enacted and in contemplation out of animus envy; and there are a number of institutions purporting to safeguard the interests of Indians in the Island. Foremost among them, the Ceylon Indian Association and the Indian Mercantile Chamber of commerce may be mentioned. Were these Indian institutions and individuals showing as much zeal in the matter as the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce, the situation would have been otherwise. Instead of beating about the bush with dissipated and spasmodic efforts, they would do well jointly to carry on a vigorous agitation, in the first place, for the abolition of the quarantive restrictions imposed by Ceylon on Indian passengers and then removal of all the customs barriers between India and Ceylon. If these two obstructions are removed, then the political communion will follow in the ordinary course, with the good will of the Ceylonese, who stand to gain to a large extent culturally and economically from the union.

# ANNEXURES.

## ANNEXURE I

*Extracts from a communication addressed by the author to Mahatma Gandhi on 4-8-31, a few days before his departure to London to attend the Second Indian Round Table Conference.*

***Aggressive foreign exploitation is allowed to go on unhindered to such an extent that it is feared that no substrata of substance will be left to build up with, if and when the Swaraj Government takes up the reins of administration in India. The fate of Haji's Bill for the reservation of the coastal trade to Indian shipping viewed along with Inchcape's latest outburst is an instance in point.

Let me give a concrete example as far as S. India is concerned. The foreign railway and shipping interests which are now virtually monopolising the land and coastwise traffic in S. India have conspired and formed themselves into a powerful combine to strangulate what indigenous enterprise remained or was beginning to show itself at the begining of the swadeshi movement. Railways of all classes and certain big ports were taken out of the control of the Provincial Governments in the interests of these foreign intriguing exploiters. The local board and private railway enterprises that were flourishing in these parts were considered a'menace to the foreign railway

and shipping interests and were suppressed by the Railway Board,—a newly set up Department of the Government of India and till lately composed exclusively of non-Indians. Indian shipping at the other seaports was sought to be wiped out, first by classifying the seaports as major and minor and then leaving the latter class to the control of the Provincial Governments but without the necessary power left to the latter to develop these ports by introducing rapid means of communication with the interior.

Let me explain this still further. The tiny Island of Ceylon, lying a few miles off the coast of S. India, has, for centuries past, been connected with the minland by blood as well as economic ties. Being a Crown Colony under the British Government, it is allowed to carry on its own administration, independent of India. Yet the interchange of traffic in passengers and cargo was being carried on between each and every port on both sides, to the social and economic benefit of both the people, mostly by means of hundreds of native crafts plying the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar, providing cheap and easy means of transport along the coast and supporting thousands of souls. The Northern Route via Jaffna, being the direct, the shortest and cheapest, was carrying the bulk of the traffic and also the daily mails between India and Ceylon. In 1897, under the guise of warding off plague entering into the Island from India, passenger traffic from S. India to Ceylon was restricted to the Tuticorin–Colombo route where the foreign steamers had just established regular service. All the other ports were effectively closed and remain so up to this day; the native vessels have

almost disappeared, ruining thousands of families of seafarers. Afterwards, finding Tuticorin to be an inhospitable harbour, (steamers having to anchor 7 or 8 miles off the foreshore), it was then proposed to link India and Ceylon by railway and ferry across the Rameswaram and Mannar sand dunes at enormous cost and the Ceylon Government were induced to connect the islet of Mannar by a railway constructed over a long stretch of uninhabited arid land. Tuticorin was almost abandoned, though temporarily, and the newly created Dhanushkodi route was placarded and much advertised as *the* Indo—Ceylon route. The Villupuram-Trichy-Manamadura chord railway (over 200 miles), which had been held indefinitely in abeyance, was hastily pushed through, in order to shorten the Madras-Dhanushkodi run by about 70 miles. But with all these efforts, the Dhanushkodi route is reputed to be a white elephant. Now the Tuticorin harbour works, which were also shelved, have been taken up with the hope of attracting at least some of the ocean going steamers now calling at the port of Colombo. For this purpose, it is understood that another new chord line of over 100 miles shall soon come into being, with a view to bring Tuticorin a little nearer to Madras. What are called 'minor' seaports, e. g., the Palk Bay ports of Point Calimere, Ammapatnam, Kottapatnam and Tondi, which were thriving in intercoastal trade, are now being starved to extinction for want of even decent road communication. In the western countries and even in Malaya, every seaport, whether major or minor, is connected by arteries of railway with the interior towns and villages, to develop foreign trade by every means

Sir West Ridgeway, who was Governor of Ceylon at the beginning of this century, explicitly told the then Secretary of State for the Colonies that the main object of the new railway to Kangesanturai (the northernmost port in the Island) was to facilitate the Indo-Ceylon traffic through the Northern Route which was, and will ever be, the shortest and cheapest between Madras and Colombo, no matter whatever facilities are afforded in others. It is noteworthy how the Government of Ceylon, whose railways are known to be notoriously productive of recurring loss, were duped in this affair. In fact, the Governments of India, Madras and Ceylon with the Indian Railway Board, all seem to be simply dancing to the tunes of the two foreign exploiting companies. During the last thirty years, all the Governments, the local bodies and individual officials concerned have been approached by means of prayers, entreaties and requests through mahazars, petitions, interviews and interpellations and resolutions in the Councils but, alas! all to no purpose.***

Be it noted that we have no quarrel with foreign traders, so long as they are keeping themselves within bounds; but when they go out of their way to interfere with the legitimate interests of the country they are allowed to trade in, it would be just to deprive them of the previlege they are now enjoying.

In these circumstances, Dear Mahatmaji, do you not think it is pertinent to ask 'Is it shadow or substance' which the Congress has been chasing all these years? And do you not think that, in the matter of *Safeguards*, about which so much is being written

and spoken, the first work to be done by the Swaraj Government is to reserve the coastal trade to Indian shipping and to leave purely local railway lines under Provincial control?***

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## ANNEXURE II

*Relevent portion of the concluding speech made by MAHATMA GHANDHI in the London R. T. C. Federal Structure Committee on Commercial Discrimination on 19th November 1931.*

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About Coastal trade too, the Congress undoubtedly has the greatest sympathy with the desire to develop coastal trade; but there if in the Bill or in any approach to this proposition about the coastal trade there is any discrimination against Europeans as such I will join hands with the Europeans and fight that Bill or the proposal which discriminates against the Englishmen because they are Englishmen. But there are these vast interests that have come into being. I have travelled fairly frequently up the great river ways of Bengal and I have travelled years ago up the Irrawaddy. I know something of that. By concessions privileges, favours, whatever you call them, these huge corporations have built up industries, built up companies and built up a trade, which does not admit of any opposition whatsoever.

Some of you may have heard of a budding company between Chittagong and Rangoon. The Directors of that Company, poor, struggling Mussalmans

came to me in Rangoon and asked me if I could do anything. My whole heart went out to them, but there was nothing to be done. What could be done? There is the mighty British India Steam Navigation Company simply underselling this budding company and practically taking the passengers without any passage money at all. I could quote instance after instance of that character. Therefore it is not because it is a British company. If it were an Indian company that had usurped this thing, it would be the same. Supposing an Indian company was taking away capital, as to-day we have Indians who, instead of investing their capital in India, invest their capital or invest monies outside India. Imagine that there was a huge Indian Corporation that was taking away all its profits and investing them in some other parts of the world, fearing that the National Government was not going along a correct policy and therefore in order to keep their money intact they were taking away that money outside. Go a little step further with me and say that these Indian Directors in order to organise in a most scientific and finished and perfect manner brought all the European skill that they could bring there and did not allow these struggling corporations to come into being. I would certainly have something to say and have legislation in order to protect the companies like the Chittagong Company. They could not even float their ships along the Irrawaddy. They gave me chapter and verse in order to assure me that it became utterly impossible; they could not get their licences, they could not get the ordinary facilities that one is entitled to. Every one of us knows what money can buy, what prestige can buy,

and when such prestige is built up which kills all the saplings, it becomes necessary then, to use the expression of Sir John Gorst which he used 12 years ago—that it then becomes necessary to lop off the tall poppies. Tall poppies ought not to be allowed to crush these saplings. That is really the case on behalf of the coastal trade. It may have been clumsily worded, the Bill. That does not matter, but I think the essence of it is absolutely correct.

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## ANNEXURE - III

*Copy of a letter from V. V. Rajaratnam appearing under a nom-de-plume in the Correspondence column of the 'HINDU' (Madras) of the 2nd January, 1932.*

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### THE INDO-CEYLON CONNECTION

Sir,—That the Indo-Ceylon route via Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar is, ever since its inception in 1914, producing trouble and expense on both sides has become an accepted evil to be put up with, in spite of the most sanguine expectations of its authors. The alignment of the 17 miles of the S. I. Railway line on the Rameswaram Island has had many a time to be altered to avoid frequent interruptions to the through traffic; yet the inundations on this length persist at the height of each annual monsoon.

Generally speaking, Ceylon does not care much for these interruptions to regular flow of traffic to and from India. On the other hand, the tendency of the

Ceylonese, particularly of the Sinhalese, the Burghers and the Moors, who from the bulk of Ceylon's population, appears to be to avoid as far as possible the influx of Indians into the Island. As for the Ceylonese Tamils, that is the Jaffnese, the older generation which enjoyed to the full extent the benefits of daily communication with South India is fast vanishing and the westernised present generation is fast losing touch with, and posing to be in no need of, the South Indian traditions, culture and civilisation, nothing to say of articles of consumption. Be that as it may, still a good number of Jaffnese, and the immigrated Indians, who number over seven lakhs, have of necessity to keep close contact with South India, with which they have religious and social ties, which they can by no means break off.

Such being the case, it is astonishing to see the apathy of leaders of these communities in Ceylon in regard to this matter. Only 35 years back there was inter-communication between each and every one of the Ceylon ports. Since then Indo-Ceylon communication has been restricted to one or two routes; while many changes have been introduced in the routes with increased trouble and expense of time and money to the travelling public. The Jaffnese who were getting their daily requirements from South Indian ports at small cost and who were travelling to and from South India as often as they pleased at the expenditure of a few rupees and in a few hour's time have now to curb their desire to go on a pilgrimage to the South Indian shrines, owing to the prohibitive cost and vexatious restrictions and delays.

The railways in Ceylon are owned and worked by the Government. The total length at present is 960·27 miles, costing Rs. 132,327,721·80 or roughly Rs. 137,888 per mile. For this enormous cost it is well known that there is no adequate return, because the railway policy of the Ceylon Government has been to sacrifice the interests of Ceylon at the dictation of other interests.

There have been for the past 10 days intermittent floods on the South Indian Railway and on the Ceylon Government Railways; consequently traffic on the sole Indo-Ceylon route is suspended for days together, passengers and mails being stranded at intermediate stations without adequate accommodation. Had the Government of Ceylon and the South Indian Railway authorities been far-sighted enough to keep alternative routes open to regular traffic between India and Ceylon just like the Dhanushkodi-Mannar route, those routes would be of immense service at this juncture in carrying on the traffic without hindrance and this unhappy state of things would have never happened. Instead, the daily steamer service between Tuticorin and Colombo has been restricted to twice a week after the introduction of the Dhanushkodi-Mannar route, while the northern route via Jaffna was closed as long ago as 1897.

The Indians and, to a lesser degree, the Jaffnese are the only people in Ceylon interested in preserving the Indo-Ceylon communication intact and it is time that the leaders of these communities wake up to their sense of duty and make every effort to have the

aforesaid two alternative routes reopened for regular Indo-Ceylon traffic.

An Indian.

Colombo, Dec. 25.

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## ANNEXURE IV

*Copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce to the Agent, S. I. Ry. dated 28th December, 1931.*

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The recent breaching of the line leading to Dhanushkodi again draws forcible attention to the disirability of seriously considering the closing down of this route to Ceylon. If it is not deemed advisable to entirely close this route meantime, then it is suggested that only a skeleton service be maintained and that mails and through passenger traffic beyond Ceylon should revert to the natural route via Tuticorin and thence to Colombo by steamer.

There is insufficient traffie to warrant the existence of two routes to Ceylon and as goods will always be carried by steamer via Tuticorin, the obvious course is to dispense with the rail route via Dhanushkodi.

There is little doubt but that the former daily sailings would be arranged between Tuticorin and Colombo, if the alternative route were to all intents and purposes closed.

It is believed that owing to the enormous capital expenditure incurred on the construction of the railway and bridges to Dhanushkodi this section of line can

never possibly yield any return and is possibly a severe drain on the revenues of the South Indian Railway every month that it is kept open.

Whatever the commitments of your Company may be with the Ceylon Government Railway, it is felt that a reconsideration of such terms should take place at once as the country can no longer afford to be burdened with unprofitable propositions for the problematical benefit of Ceylon.

The frequent breaches of this line within recent years has resulted in serious delay to mails and traffic generally, particularly inconveniencing passengers and necessitating recourse to the steamer route to Colombo via Tuticorin.

## OF FREQUENT OCCURRENCE

There is reason to believe that owing to the nature of the terrain such breaches are likely to be of frequent occurrence and this combined with the damage sustained by drifting sand must involve very heavy and recurring expenditure on this line every year during both monsoons.

It is further reported that the Pamban bridge requires or will shortly require a large amount expended to ensure its stability.

I would therefore request you, in the interests of economy and efficiency and having regard to the necessity of affording safe and regular conveyance of passengers, mails and goods, to consider the advisability of closing the line to Dhanushkodi without further delay.

So far as the connecting railway on the Ceylon side is concerned, it would appear that their line is also sub-

ject to frequent breaching and at the present time very severe damage is reported to have been sustained, with the result that trains have been cut off both from rail and road access for a time.

This serves to further emphasise the futility and extravagance of maintaining this route and in the present state of Ceylon's finances, that country would probably be only too willing to be relieved of the burden of maintaining this connexion.

The construction of the Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar connexion was, of course, a colossal blunder, but there is no reason why the error should be perpetuated and it would surely be infinitely better to cut the losses now and close this route.

If the South Indian Railway Administration and Government had co-operated with one another and adopted the obvious course of developing the port of Tuticorin, the result would have afforded reliable economical and remunerative communicating services between India and Ceylon.

Instead of which there now exists what must be regarded as "a white elephant" in the Dhanuskodi-Talaimannar rail route and something worse than that in an abandoned harbour scheme at Tuticorin.

In addition to the enormous waste of money on the two schemes, the public has still to tolerate the absence of sufficient and reliable transit facilities between India and Ceylon.

## ANNEXURE V

*Copy of reply to the above from the Agent, South Indian Railway, Trichinopoly dated 8th January, 1932.*

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To the Hony. Secretary, Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce, Tuticorin.

Dear Sir,—Referring to your letter of 28th December 1931, and its enclosure of same date both to my address, I am very surprised to see that the visitation of a cyclone which of course nobody can control, and the consequent interruption caused thereby to the existing connexion between India and Ceylon via Dhanushkodi should have led the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce to reopen the question of the best route for passenger traffic between the two countries, a question which was very carefully considered and discussed before the present route was constructed some 30 years ago.

Your letter referred to calls for a reply, giving any comments I may desire to make on the enclosure thereto "by return," but this enclosure raises so many and such various points of issue on which comment is possible that to reply to them in detail "by return" is not feasible.

In order to meet your request for an early reply, I can only say, briefly, that although I realise conditions on the existing route via Dhanushkodi with its short sea passage of 2 hours only are by no means ideal, this route must always be in my opinion, preferable to the Tuticorin one. I have a very vivid personal recollection of the diasbilities and discomforts of the 12-hour sea passage between Tuticorin and Colombo, conditions which would still remain however much the facilities of

Tuticorin Port itself may in the future come to be developed and I have little doubt as to which route the travelling public, who may have had the opportunity of sampling the two alternatives, as I have, would prefer.

You suggest circulating copies of your letter to the various Chambers of Commerce, etc., as well as to the Press of South India and Ceylon and should you decide to do so, I can only ask that you will also circulate copies of this my reply. I shall look forward with considerable interest to seeing the comments, if any, thereon.

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## ANNEXURE VI

*Copy of an Editorial which appeared in the 'Times of Ceylon' of the 14th January, 1932.*

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### TUTICORIN TRIES AGAIN

The Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce can, at times, be delightfully disingenuos. For 30 years it has been deeply pained by "the colossal blunder" which was perpetrated when the Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar route was constructed. The fact that the new route was a set-back to the development of Tuticorin is always kept steadfastly in the background. The people of Tuticorin are primarily concerned with the interests of the South Indian Railway and the safety of those who travel between India and Ceylon—at least that is what they wish us to believe. The recent floods have led to the reopening of this much discussed controversy, and the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce has addressed to the South Indian Railway a letter which is masterly for

its make-believe of concern for others rather than interest in Tuticorin. The recent breaching of the line leading to Dhahushkodi "draws attention to the desirability of seriously considering the closing down of this route to Ceylon", or, if this is going too far, only a skeleton service should be maintained and mails and through passenger traffic beyond Ceylon should revert to the Tuticorin route and thence to Colombo by steamer. The Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce is gravely perturbed about the heavy financial burdens which lie on the railway. The construction of the Dhanushkodi route at the time entailed enormous expenditure, so enormous indeed that the Chamber is satisfied that the section "can never possibly yield any return and is probably a severe drain on the revenues of the South Indian Railway every month it is kept open." Furthermore, from time to time there are storms, serious breaches occur on the railway, and further heavy expenditure has to be incurred. Over and above everything else, the Pamban Bridge is believed to require a large amount of money to be expended upon it. Having regard to all the circumstances of the situation, the Chamber has come to the conclusion that "in the interests of economy, efficiency, and having regard to the necessity of affording safe and regular conveyance of passengers, mails and goods," the closing of the line to Dhanushkodi 'without further delay' should be considered. It is really a very moving document. Nevertheless, the Agent of the S. I. Railway does not appear to have been in the least impressed. His reply is terse and to the point. His primary concern is the comfort of those who travel between the two countries. Speaking from personal experience, he unhesitatingly insists

that the two hour route between Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar is infinitely preferable to the 12 hour sea voyage between Tuticorin and Colombo. Statistics relating to the upkeep of the Dhanushkodi section are not available to us, so we cannot deal with this aspect of the situation but we are quite certain that all who have occasion to travel between India and Ceylon will agree with Mr. Rothera that even though the Dhanushkodi–Talaimannar route is by no means ideal, and even though occasionally it may be interrupted, it is in every respect preferable to the trying sea trip between Tuticorin and Colombo. But then of course, no one is going to take the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce very seriously. The havoc wrought by the recent cyclone afforded an opportunity far too good to be missed. No one would be more surprised than the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce if the letter to the South Indian Railway was regarded as anything but a seasonal lament.

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## ANNEXURE VII

*Copy of a communication from the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce, published in the 'Times of Ceylon' dated* 25-1-1932

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### DHANUSHKODI–TALAIMANNAR RAIL ROUTE

Sir,—I am directed to thank you for inserting the correspondence exchanged between this Chamber and the Agent, South Indian Railway Co., Ltd., regarding the Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar rail route in your issue of 14th inst.

It is rather suprising, however, that a newspaper of standing should choose this subject in order to indulge in satire of such questionable taste in a leading article. I would ask you to insert this further letter in order to eradicate certain incorrect impressions your article creates. The Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar route was opened to traffic about 20 years ago, not 30. Several officers occupying responsible positions in the Railway at the time agreed with this Chamber that the construction of the route would be a colossal blunder. The people of Tuticorin are not materially affected by the rail route. The population of the town has increased by about a third in the last decade and its geographical position assures its continued development in the future. This Chamber writes mainly in the interests of the hinterland served by Tuticorin port—an area considerably larger than the whole of Ceylon.

I do not propose to comment at length on the respective discomforts of the alternative routes, but I should doubt whether most travellers' experiences by the Tuticorin route could possibly have been worse than many I know of by the rail and ferry route.

There is little to be gained by citing individual instances of preference for one route over the other, but I have yet to meet anyone who has travelled *regularly* by both routes who does not prefer the Tuticorin crossing, and, with a daily steamer service as formerly, I have no doubt which route would draw the traffic.

There would be no lack of condemnation of the Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar route, were the Tuticorin

steamer service not always there to fall back on during the numerous suspensions of traffic by the rail route.

Dealing with your interview with the General Manager, Ceylon Government Railways, reported in your issue of the 15th instant. I regret that, having some experience of Government methods of accounting, I cannot attach much importance to the few figures quoted.

The leader in your issue of 16th inst., anent the serious position of Ceylon Railways, is probably more to the point and apparently regard has been given to capital cost and upkeep in addition to mere receipts and expenditure.

In any case the reported profitable result of the Ceylon portion of the line rather bears out the view generally held here, that India is paying dearly for the traffic that is diverted to the rail route.

When economic forces are allowed free play. the colossal blunder perpetrated in the rail route will be apparent to all, though I imagine there are few conversant with the position who have not already realized it.—Yours, etc.

R. H. HOBDAY
Hon. Secretary,
Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce.

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# ANNEXURE VIII

*Copy of a Communication which appeared in 'Times of Ceylon' dated 1st February, 1932.*

## RAILWAY ROUTE BETWEEN CEYLON AND INDIA.

### COMMENTS ON ABANDONING THE MANNAR ROUTE.

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Following the correspondence between the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce and the Agent of the South Indian Railway on the subject of abandoning the railway route between India and Ceylon, which was published in the 'Times of Ceylon' on January 14th, a further letter has been forwarded to us by the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce, received from Mr. V. V. Rajaratnam, whose views on the subject are of interest.

The letter is as follows:—

So the Tuticorin Chamber of Commerce is again at the game! Taking advantage of the unfortunate havoc wrought by the somewhat virulent cyclone to to the Dhanushkodi—Talaimannar route, it took courage to write to the Agent of the South Indian Railway suggesting the closure of this newly created route and that authority has curtly told the Tuticorin people that he knew better than they about the comparative merits of the rival routes. So the matter ends to all intents and purposes and the' Times of Ceylon' may well chuckle over the episode, giving an admonition and its advise to the Tuticorin Chamber.

Of course the Tuticorin Chamber ought to have known that the new route is being zealously guarded by its sponsors against any sort of competition and ought to have refrained from treading on forbidden ground. The quarantine camp has been sprung at Mandapam at the expense of the Ceylon Government and the railway, the ferry and all the appurtenances have been brought into existence at the cost of both the Indian and Ceylon Governments. Hence it is primarily the concern of the tax-payers on both sides to decide whether to keep this route open or closed.

## COMPULSORY DIVERSION

What the Tuticorin Chamber might have taken objection to is the compulsory diversion of the inter-traffic to this only route, as if through a bottle neck, thus strangulating developments of many other ports. There are indeed, much older routes which are denied their legitimate share and equal opportunity.

Nowhere in the world is such a sweeping restriction imposed on the communication between two adjoining territories as in the case of the Indo-Ceylon traffic. This is the invitable result of India and Ceylon being held under tutelage. No such restriction can be thought of in the case of, say, Britain and the Continent, which afford the nearest analogy to Ceylon and India, respectively, in point of juxtaposition and constant interchange of traffic.

Up to the close of the last century there was but one recognised regular route which carried the mails and a fair proportion of passengers and commodities between Ceylon and India. But then there was no compulsory diversion of traffic to

that or any other route. On the contrary, every one of the South Indian ports was then in direct communication with every port of Ceylon. 35 years ago there came a death blow to this healthy intercourse. All the Indo-Ceylon traffic was diverted to the Tuticorin-Colombo route and was subjected to the quarantine rigours. This went on until March 1914 when the present Talaimannar route sprang into existence and is ever since holding sway with the high sounding title of *the* Indo-Ceylon route. Between Tuticorin and Colombo a bi-weekly steamer service is still maintained while the other old route is being carefully suppressed. This is ths brief resume of the various phases of the Indo-Ceylon connexion up to date. For future reference, let us call these three routes as northern, central and southern.

## GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECT.

The northern route has about 40 miles of sea crossing, the central 22 miles and the southern 150 miles. Before considering the merits and demerits of the three Indo-Ceylon routes from the standpoint of the travelling public and interchange of commerce, we must look into the geographical and geodesical aspects of Ceylon. The Island may be divided into two halves by an imaginary line drawn west to east from Chilaw to Batticaloa. The southern half is mountainous, fertile and thickly populated. Almost all the tea, rubber, cocoanut and other plantations on which the Indian labourers are put to work as well as all the big trading centres are to be found in the southern half of the Island. Whereas the northern half is comparatively low-lying, arid, jungle ridden and sparsely populated, except in the compact

area of the Jaffna Peninsula at the northern end of the Island.

Now, with regard to the paying capacity of the three Indo-Ceylon routes, there could not be the least doubt as far as the two old routes are concerned. As for the newly-created central route it passes through the shifting sand dunes of the Rameswaram and the Mannar Islands and, for a considerable length, through the thinly populated jungle land of Ceylon. If this route were to be a remunerative undertaking, it must depend very largely, if not solely, on the Indo-Ceylon traffic. In other words, it may be taken as a quasi—political route as distinct from the public routes, and since the quarantine camp is located at Mandapam, it may also be the coolie route.

Here are comparative figures, (since revised to bring up-to-date) showing the mileage of, and duration of journey on, the three Indo-Ceylon routes:—

NORTHERN ROUTE

Madras–Calimere (S. I. Ry.)—miles 245, hours, 10¾.

Transhipment—miles, *nil*, hour, 1.

Calimere–Kangesanturai (Ferry)–miles 35, hours 3¾,

Transhipment—hours, 1½.

Kangesanturai-Colombo Fort (C. G. Ry.)—miles, 258 hours 12½.

Total miles, 538 total hours, 29.

CENTRAL ROUTE

Madras—Dhanushkodi (S. I, Ry.)—miles 382 hours 18.

Transhipment—miles, *nil*, hour 0-40. Dhanushkodi-Talaimannar (Ferry)—miles, 22, hours, 2-20

Transhipment—miles, *nil*; hours, 1-20,

Talaimannar-Colombo Fort. (C. G. Ry.)—miles 210; hours, 10-20.

Total miles 615; hours, 32-40.

SOUTHERN ROUTE

Madras—Tuticorin (S.I. Ry.)—miles, 395; hours, 19.

Transhipment—miles, *nil*; hours, 3.

Tuticorin—Colombo Jetty (B.I. Steamer)—miles, 150; hours, 11.

Total miles, 545; hours, 33.

The above figures, be it noted, relate to the journey all the way between Madras and Colombo by the shortest possible direct lines of railway. existing and proposed. But while the central route remains virtually unchanged under all circumstances, the other two routes would be much more shortened for journeys between intermediate points. For instance, the northern route would afford a shorter passage than any other to journeys to and from the Coromandel Coast districts as far north as Calcutta. Similarly, the southern route would be cheaper and shorter for journeys between Colombo and the Tinnevelly District and the Travancore State.

The permanent Tamil population of Ceylon, mostly concentrated within the Jaffna Peninsula, hold social, religious and economic intercourse with South India, which they can ill-afford to have restricted for ever as has been done for the past 35 years. There are 4 seaports on the Jaffna coast, namely, Kayts, Kangesanturai, Valvettiturai and Point Pedro. All of these

have a long history to their credit—much longer than Colombo—and were, in a way, flourishing with busy shipping. They are but 40 miles off the opposite coast of South India and, given the necessary incentive and some of the modern facilities as in the case of Talaimannar, the crossing ought not to take more than 4 hours. Can any one say that these North Ceylon ports are incapable of future development and are, as such, to be condemned to remain closed for ever?

Again, no one can be so foolhardy as to suppose that the Dhanushkodi—Talaimannar route will always remain the sole and exclusive Indo—Ceylon route, irrespective of future developments. At least none in India, who has any claim to a knowledge of the historical and geographical aspects of the question, ever holds such a retrogressive view. After all the S. I. Ry. Co. is not for long going to be dictating transport policies in South India.

In the not distant future the Madras Government is expected to become autonomous, "enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation." Suppose it is then decided in the interests of the Indian tax-payers to close down the costly Dhanushkodi—Talaimannar route and to have the northern and southern routes re-opened and also to throw open all the South Indian ports to foreign shipping to give fair opportunity to each one of them to develop on its own merits. Looking still further ahead, there are proposals of air mail services to be introduced between Madras and Colombo and when mails and passengers will be carried by 'planes between important towns in India and

Ceylon, as they are done in the West, neither the S.I. Ry. Co., nor, indeed, any other vested interests, will be able to continue their obstructive tactics as at present and the existing monopolising tendency can no longer be tolerated in the face of the world's progress that is proceeding at such tremendous pace from narrow nationalism towards broad universalism.

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## ANNEXURE IX

*Extracts from a confidential communication received by the author on 1-3-32 from a reliable source.*

I understand you are publishing a pamphlet about the Dhanushkodi and Tuticorin routes to Ceylon and considering the loss of 947 lacs for last year of Indian railways, I think the time is opportune.***

*The point is the S. I. Ry. would carry exactly the same amount of traffic, if the Dhanushkodi route was closed and the Tuticorin or any other route could easily take all the traffic.*

You perhaps know that there is an agreement between the B. I. Co. and the S. I. Ry., which allows a certain amount of traffic to go by Dhanushkodi route and allows the B. I. Co. to keep up the killing rate of Rs. 15/- per c. ft for tea and other cargo and Rs.. 17/8 for cardamoms from Tuticorin to Colombo. The B.I., of course, gets some compensation from the S. I. Ry , but as a result of this *secret pact*, there is no competition and the Dhanushkodi line gets some traffic which it would never get, if the Tuticorin route was com-

peting. This allows the Dhanushkodi line to show traffic receipts and the B. I. Co. gets enough traffic for a twice weekly service to pay handsomely, with compensation from the Railway for any traffic they may be losing. For all this the public pays and as there is no competition, neither party cares about improving conditions to get more traffic.

I hope you will enquire into all this and publish the facts, so that Tuticorin and all other routes may get the traffic they deserve, according to the facilities that they give.

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## ANNEXURE X

*Extracts from the speech made by Dr. W. Stede,* PH. D., *Lecturer in Pali and Sanskrit in the University of London at the Meeting of the Ceylon Students' Association held on 13-2-1932 at the Indian Students' Hostel in Gower Street, London, under the presidency of Dr. B. E. Fernando.*

***I have a good deal to say about the introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon and about the influence it has had upon the life of the people. That is the great heritage which Ceylon owes to India.

***I have been struck by the fact that many Ceylonese do not like to be called Indians (*some one in the audience:* "Although this used to be the case, there is a change to-day, because India is going to be free)." I am very glad to hear of this change, whatever the cause might be. My own view is that the

connection with India has been excercised on the smaller country in diverse ways from the earliest times and there are marked affinities between them in race, language, literature etc. *You may really call India your Motherland.* Don't be afraid to make the most of that part of your heritage. You are, in fact, one with India.***

*The President's remarks:*

I am proud to call myself an Indian, for it is obvious that all the most precious things in our culture, our religion and our art we owe to India. *I do not see why we should want to disown our own parents.* I may quote a remark made to me by Mr. Srinivasa Sastri:—

"*India is going to get freedom before long; I advise you to hang on to India.*"

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## ANNEXURE XI

*Extracts from the speech of Mrs. C. V. Aserappa, the newly elected President of the Women's Political Union of Ceylon, made at its annual general meeting held on 28-2-32.*

* * *

Mother India has many daughters and among them, we certainly count Ceylon; and as such we are all Indians. The name India is often indirectly used to signify people living in India alone. The term India is a generic term like the term European, and just as there are many races in Europe, so there are many races in India, but they are all Indians and the Sinhalese are Indians also.

Daughter Lanka was given in marriage long years ago to a rich husband in a distant, beautiful and fertile land; but neither time nor distance can alter the fact that she is still a daughter of India. Separation from the parental home, the influence, sometimes disastrous, of foreign nations from the West, have no doubt had its baneful effect upon her language, art, music, customs and ideals, but at heart Lanka is still a daughter of Mother India.***

We have clung steadfastly to the ancient culture and ideals of our land through all the storms and vicissitudes our beloved Motherland has gone through and is going through today and nothing would give her so much joy as to see her daughter Lanka, who had left the old home so many years ago, returning some day to her bosom.

* * * * *

You must take your rightful share in building up a better state of things for this beautiful Island—the resplandent jewel on the brow of India and the comeliest of her daughters.* * * *

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## ANNEXURE XII

*Extracts from a recent book, "India and Ceylon; A Federation" by "Kalmane" published by King and Son, Orchard House, Westminister, London S. W. I.*

*Ceylon as an Autonomous Indian Province*

No better example of two countries passing through the same political vicissitudes and passing through the same national aspirations can be found as

India and Ceylon. The interests of these two countries have so coincided in political history that their union would give birth to a State free and united, because both of them have gone through the same circumstances and had the same lines of advance.

*Indian Labour in Ceylon.*

Economically, both the countries have been undergoing the converting effects of the industrial revolution. The establishment of modern means of communication over the most outlying parts of India has brought the different provinces together, not only increasing their economic needs, but also making them economically interdependent. This contributed to a revolution in the social outlook even in rural communities, leading to a policy of expansion and greater mobility of labour. This movement has had a direct effect upon Ceylon, for the labour of S. India helped to cover Ceylon with a network of railways and to transform the dense stretches of forest into productive plantations of coffee, tea, cocoa and rubber. Considering how Indian enterprise and labour have ~~countries~~ contributed to the present prosperity of Ceylon, it stands to reason that a unification embracing the economic interests of the two countries can lead to a preeminence in the special trade possibilities of both countries.

An instance may be cited in the present situation of the tea industry, in which India holds the premier position with Ceylon coming second. A combination of the interests between the two combines would confine the industry within India and Ceylon and at the same time extend its sphere of production At present

this possible economic advantage is divided on account of the political separation.

*Economic Advantages.*

The economic advantages that would follow the union of India and Ceylon cannot be exaggerated...In the aggregate, the volume of export trade in Ceylon from India bears no mean share. Especially in commodities like tea, coffee, rubber and spices, the production of which is common to the maiuland and Ceylon, a pooling of resources is of vital import to the future of these industries. Although the immediate effect may bring a few defects, a far-sighted policy would see that a union will be to the lasting good of both countries. In short, Ceylon would gain in all the economic advantages a comparatively small country, however prosperous it might be, could gain as a result of association with a larger country, whose economic conditions are more or less the same. Considered closely, the economic condition of India are intimately allied to those of Ceylon and a common solution can be easily found by cordial cooporation and not competition.

*Member of a Union.*

If Ceylon be viewed in the light of a Colony which is apt to be exploited by a foreign country in its own interests, the argument for union is only further supported. As a member of the Great Union of India, Ceylon can claim and enjoy the protection and safety which a large unit would be able to maintain against an external economic policy which may not be beneficial to it On the other hand, Ceylon would be free from any protective tariff measure that India may find necessary to take in future in order to safeguard her industrial position.

### *What History Reveals.*

History speaks in clear accents of the profound influence that the two countries had on each other and the friendly and intimate contact that they maintained till their political separation. It is surprising that a proposal for a reunion of the two countries after the separation did not come earlier, while all the facts of their well being point unerringly to such a course. Perhaps the only explanation is that the mainland was deeply engrossed by the problems of the political freedom on one hand, while, on the other, Ceylon kept the noiseless tenor of her way through her steady economic dovelopment and material prosperity It is hardly necessary to emphasise the fact that a few decades of separation effected in favour of mere administrative convenience should not stand in the way of a union of India and Ceylon.

### *Insular Pride of Ceylon*

In this connection it is not wise to ignore the feeling of insular pride that might have developed in a Sinhalese, as a *citizen of Ceylon* But this is no real impediment to the unification. In India itself this feeling is evident and an illuminating example is offered by the Native States, who still cling to tradition and local patriotism. But even they have not found it inexpedient to gain a Federated India. Another problem is that Ceylon may find that certain administrative details and other matters are peculiar to her own and best left to herself. Even this problem is not unknown to India, because the provinces of India itself claim an amount of autonomy which it has been found possible to accommodate with a central control of affairs of uniform national

interest. So a federal system of one sort or other can be created to suit the needs of Ceylon.

*The Federal State.*

It is idle to describe the various forms of federalism here, since constitutions can never be copied, nor written by a single individual but should be formed by discussion and deliberation based on the facts of historical tendencies. Upon this principle the facts of history are rich in arguments for unification of India and Ceylon and a great common measure of agreement can be easily reached between them. All the necessary conditions of a Federal Union are present in the case of India and Ceylon. Geographically they are one, politically they were parts of the same administration till the end of the 18th century, culturally and socially the kinship is so intimate as we have seen...Economically there is a great deal to gain by a federation of India and Ceylon...What reasons are there for Ceylon to decline such an opportunity? She would not be compromising her independence by being a partner in the federation. On the contrary, she would at least be absolved from the tutelage of a foreign power. In addition she would share the prestige and vast resources of India......In the same way, her (England's) position would be made more secure by the unification of India and Ceylon. A self-governing India is an asset to her. A self-governing and united Indian Federation in which Ceylon is included will be a greater asset. Ceylon would occupy exactly the same place in the Indian Federation as any other autonomous Province like Bombay and Madras. She would be represented in both the Upper and Lower Chambers of the Legislature on the basis of population like Switzerland. The eventual details that would

ensue as a result of such a proposed federation could be dicussed and settled at the appropriate juncture. The broad conclusion remains irresistible—the inclusion of Ceylon in the Indian Federation is not only from every point of view feasible, but also highly desirable

*Disquieting Prospects of Keeping Apart.*

On the other hand, the examination of the prospects of these two countries if they persist in keeping apart is very disquieting. It is to be imagined that the present agitation of the Ceylon National Congress for full responsible government would be an accomplished fact in the near future. How, then, will this small Island provide itself with its defence and counteract the temptation she holds out to many an ambitious nation both in the East and in Europe? Granting that Ceylon will have the determination to defend herself with what resources she possesses, would her five million population be sufficient man-power? On the other hand, an analysis of the disadvantages that lie in India's way, were Ceylon to remain under foreign control, is equally threatening. By its position Ceylon affords excellent facilities as a military base (naval and aerial) in the Indian Ocean. It will attain a state like that of Malta and will ever continue to be a strategic element in Eastern military policy.

*The Obvious Course.*

Therefore, the only obvious course open for Ceylon for its greater prosperity and national security and for India for its permanent peace is to unite, setting a precedence and example to other nations. The situation involves a certain amount of uneasiness for

both sides, but the presence of mutual danger is certain to lend a touch of genius in the solution of the problems of their federation which cannot but be of a permanent advantage to both countries.

*Common Destiny*

It is impossible to realise why in all the twenty centuries and more of Ceylon's history, this scheme had not been conceived. If there are two countries in the world separated by a strip of water but united in every other way by ties of blood, by bonds of culture, by the demon of national danger and by vicissitudes of history, these two countries are India and Ceylon. But outstanding above all these considerations, there is repeated in the course of centuries the emphasis of the *common destiny* of the two countries. And now in the years ahead, with nations all over the world attaining the acme of efficiency, not by remaining as small integral entities by themselves, but by attempting to make treaties that benefit the interests of two or more countries, Ceylon must federate with India, as its first step to its entry into the Federation of Mankind and the Parliament of Nations.

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